



Psychotherapy & Counselling
Federation of Australia

SUPERVISION TRAINING STANDARDS 2020

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Introduction

These Supervision Training Standards are minimum, generic standards. As such, training bodies are free to include additional training components relevant to supervision and/or to incorporate modality-specific theory and training styles relevant to supervision.

Supervision is a requisite for all practising psychotherapists and counsellors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practitioners. Additionally, it is an integral component of all training programs.

Practitioners on the PACFA Register need to demonstrate that they have received 10 hours of supervision per annum.

Trainees need to demonstrate 10 hours of supervision relating to 40 hours of client contact. This must be over a minimum of two years for trainees in a postgraduate training program and a minimum of three years for those in an undergraduate training program.

As noted in the PACFA Training Standards (section 9.8) *“as supervision presumes a level of competence beyond the most basic, supervisors should have been eligible to be clinical members of a relevant professional association for at least three years”* i.e. a minimum total of 5 years clinical experience.

SUPERVISION TRAINING STANDARDS

The following Supervision Training Standards have been established to ensure the quality of supervision provision in meeting the above set requirements.

1. ADMISSION

1.1 Principles for Supervisor Training

- 1.1.1 Supervisor trainee applicants need to show suitable relational qualities, clinical competencies, and demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of supervision as a prerequisite for beginning training as a supervisor. These capacities can be demonstrated through a combination of any of the following processes – detailed written application, live interview, referees, prior observation in collegial or training situations, etc.
- 1.1.2 Since supervision is a relational, facilitative, supportive and educative skill, supervisor trainee applicants should demonstrate a capacity for these skills. This needs to be observed in an initial interview.

- 1.1.3 Supervisor trainee applicants need to demonstrate a capacity to understand and practise ethical behaviour and be prepared to follow a code of ethics which is required to be an integrated part of the supervisor training program.
- 1.1.4 The above qualities presume a certain level of mature life experience on the part of the applicant, and this is shown by the capacity to reflect on and learn from experience, including being open to constructive and challenging feedback.

1.2 Selection Process for Supervisor Training Applicants

- 1.2.1 The process of selection needs to be non-discriminatory on the grounds of gender, class, cultural background, sexual preference, disability or beliefs.
- 1.2.2 Supervisor trainee applicants must have practice experience. It is recommended that applicants have completed a minimum of 5 years clinical experience as a qualified psychotherapist, counsellor or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practitioner.

2. CURRICULUM

2.1 Curriculum Requirements

- 2.1.1 Each supervisor training program needs to make a clear statement of the philosophy of supervision training underpinning the course and give evidence that the guidelines of the current PACFA Supervision Training Standards are being met.
- 2.1.2 Course outlines are required to be provided to all applicants at the outset of training.
- 2.1.3 Supervisor graduates must have completed a supervisor training course that is substantially focused on supervision, of at least 36 course hours in total, and that extends over a minimum of three months to allow for the integration of personal and clinical learning. The minimum course requirement of 36 hours is seen as equivalent to a university semester of 3 hours x 12 sessions. However, supervision training occurs in both academic and private sectors and it is at the discretion of the training body as to how the program is structured given the stated minimum timeframe.

2.2 Principles of Learning for Supervisor Training

The learning environment needs to be set up according to the following principles:

- 2.2.1 An environment in which the trainee feels supported emotionally and in the learning process;
- 2.2.2 Opportunities for practice, reflection, experimenting, and training delivery;
- 2.2.3 An active partnership between trainees and trainers which includes the opportunity to reflect interactively on theory and practice and to receive appropriate feedback on performance;
- 2.2.4 Clearly articulated learning goals, with a course content and process appropriate to those goals;
- 2.2.5 Adequate facilities to enable a learning experience to occur;
- 2.2.6 Mindfulness of matters relating to confidentiality as well as the ethical complexities involved in supervisor training and practice.

2.3 Theoretical Components of Supervisor Training

Supervisor graduates must have attended 36 hours of direct face to face teaching in supervision theory and practice, which may take place either in person or via synchronous online learning (e.g. interactive webinars) or a blend of these. Training must be 100% face-to-face synchronous learning, regardless of whether it takes place online or in person in the same room. This learning could involve methods such as lectures, (live or synchronous online), written notes, set readings, seminars, group discussions, role-plays and experiential methods such as practice dyads. Since supervision is a practical skill, theoretical components must be taught in ways which relate to practice situations.

- 2.3.1 Supervisor graduates must be able to situate their supervision theory and practice modality within the broader field of psychotherapy, counselling, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices and supervision models and will have deepened their understanding of relevant psychological theories.
- 2.3.2 Supervisor graduates must have completed a course that includes competencies in terms of skills, knowledge and values with reference to PACFA's current standards and codes of ethics. Integral to the development of these competencies are the trainee supervisor's capacities for self-awareness and self-assessment.

As such the following competencies need to be integrated into the supervisor training course*:

- Ability to structure supervision sessions
- Ability to facilitate the supervisee to present information about their clinical work
- Ability to facilitate the supervisee to reflect on their work and on the process of supervision
- Ability to help the supervisee practise specific clinical skills
- Ability to use a range of methods to give accurate and constructive feedback
- Ability to employ educational principles to enhance learning
- Ability to conduct supervision across a variety of formats such as direct observation and face to face, whether in person, by synchronous online video conference or telephone
- Ability to conduct supervision across the variety of client presentations such as individuals, couples, family and group
- Ability to supervise across a range of therapy modalities
- Ability to enhance ethical practice
- Ability to foster competence in working with difference
- Ability to adapt supervision to the organisational and governance context
- Ability to form and maintain a supervisory alliance
- Ability to manage threats to the supervisory alliance
- Ability to assess the supervisee's level of competence
- Ability to apply standards
- Ability to support the supervisee's ability to manage their caseload
- Ability to detect and support personal and professional issues which could impact on the supervisee's capacities
- Ability for supervisor to reflect and act on limitations in own knowledge and experience
- Ability to be aware of and act on potential sources of evaluation bias

**Adapted from research commissioned by Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP), Skills for Health and NHS Education for Scotland (NESS) 2010.*

2.4 Supervision Practice

- 2.4.1 Training in supervision practice needs to be informed by the theories and models of supervision and the link between theory and practice must be clearly articulated in the course document.
- 2.4.2 Supervisor graduates must have completed a course of which at least 33% of the course hours is experiential (12 hours) which may take place either in person or via synchronous online learning or a blend of these. Experiential activities must be 100% face-to-face synchronous learning, regardless of whether it takes place online or in person in the same room. Experiential activities refer to clinical training, such as modelling by clinicians, practice triads, activities based on audiovisual resources, role-plays, concrete and specific feedback.
- 2.4.3 Supervisor graduates must have completed, during the training program, a minimum of 10 hours of supervised practice in the role of supervisor in addition to the 36 hours of coursework. The supervised practice may be undertaken with private supervision clients or with supervision clients arranged by the training program.

2.5 Development of Self

- 2.5.1 An understanding of the use of self in the supervisory relationship should be integrated within the training program according to the particular model being taught.
- 2.5.2 Where it is identified that a supervisor trainee needs psychotherapy, counselling or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices, it should be encouraged as a way of deepening personal congruence and self-awareness. It must be sought in a way which does not disadvantage either the therapy itself or the student's participation in the training program.

3. ASSESSMENT

3.1 Assessment Processes

Supervisor trainees need to demonstrate knowledge of the model-specific supervision theory/theories as well as an ability to apply this theory in competent supervision practice. Assessments include demonstration of knowledge of supervision through written assignments, examinations, oral presentations, case studies and contribution to class discussion, as well as demonstration of supervision practice skills via live supervision, practice dyads, and recorded interviews (audio or audiovisual).

3.2 Assessment Feedback

Supervisor trainees need to receive relevant, detailed, and timely feedback on all assessment tasks.

4. TRAINER CREDENTIALS

4.1 General Principles

Any training program in supervision involves educators with varying levels of qualifications and experience. Besides those who have primary responsibility for the training program, other educators with less or different training may enrich the learning environment with particular contributions.

However, all trainers teaching supervision must meet the PACFA Supervision Training Standards. The following guidelines apply directly to those who have the primary responsibility for a training program, in particular to the course coordinator. It is the responsibility of the course coordinator, in conjunction with the other faculty members, to monitor the standards of contributing supervisor trainers.

4.2 Course Coordinators

- 4.2.1 Course coordinators must have qualifications (or equivalent) in supervision of psychotherapy, counselling or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices at least one level higher than the training being conducted by them.
- 4.2.2 Course coordinators must be qualified psychotherapists, counsellors or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practitioners who are eligible for membership of the professional body relevant to their qualification. They should at least meet PACFA Register standards. They should have at least five years' experience providing clinical supervision.
- 4.2.3 Course coordinators need to be concurrently engaged in the practice of supervision of psychotherapy, counselling or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices.
- 4.2.4 Course coordinators need to demonstrate competence in facilitating adult learning, with some training or equivalent work experience in training delivery.
- 4.2.5 Course coordinators must be willing to disclose to supervisor trainees their own training experience, philosophy of training and theoretical preferences.
- 4.2.6 Course coordinators must be committed to their own ongoing professional development and give evidence of such development when required.

4.3 Course coordinators need to foster curiosity and exploration in supervisor trainees.

- 4.3.1 Course coordinators must not be in breach of professional ethical practice and should make sure that the same principle applies to all trainers and supervisor trainees. (See PACFA Ethical Guidelines).
- 4.3.2 Course coordinators engage in respectful interactions with supervisor trainees and facilitate an atmosphere of open and honest expression of thoughts and feelings relevant to the training.
- 4.3.3 Course coordinators must not discriminate between supervisor trainees on the basis of gender, class, cultural background, sexual preference, or any disability or belief that does not directly interfere with the competent fulfilment of their training role.
- 4.3.4 Course coordinators must make sure that all courses are assessed by the supervisor trainees, and that the feedback is made known to the course coordinator and the appropriate trainers.

4.4 Trainers

- 4.4.1 Trainers other than the course coordinators who have primary responsibility for substantial aspects of supervision training delivery, and are designated the title of trainer rather than tutor or consultant, etc., should meet the same criteria as outlined for course coordinators (points 4.2.1 to 4.2.11) with a minimum of 5 years' experience as practitioners within their field.

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision is a contractual, collaborative process which monitors, develops and supports supervisees in their clinical role. Clinical supervision can be undertaken as **Individual Supervision, Peer Supervision & Group Supervision** (see definitions below).

In clinical supervision the central focus is on both the optimum treatment outcome for the client and the professional development and self-care of the supervisee.

The process of clinical supervision is seen to encompass a number of significant components, including a formal agreement between supervisor and supervisee. It is an opportunity for the supervisee to present relevant material regarding their clinical practice via case discussion, recordings of client sessions, role plays, etc., allowing a space for reflective review by the supervisee and feedback by the supervisor. The supervisory relationship and process of supervision are congruent with the developmental needs of the supervisee.

2. Individual Supervision

Individual supervision refers to clinical supervision undertaken by an individual supervisee with a designated supervisor. The supervisor will most often be a more senior clinician or have acquired more experience in a specialist area of practice. Senior practitioners may well choose a supervisor of equal experience whereby the supervision lends itself as a space for reflection and for gaining alternative perspectives.

3. Peer Supervision

Peer supervision refers to reciprocal supervision arrangements where colleagues or peers work together for mutual benefit, rotating the roles of supervisor and supervisee. This is a formal process where clinicians contract to provide collegial critiquing and enhancement of each other's clinical work. Peer supervision can be undertaken as a dyad or within a small group of up to 6 members.

Peer supervision is considered more beneficial for experienced practitioners than for novice practitioners. Peer supervision hours are not accepted for PACFA Register purposes for those with less than 5 years clinical experience post eligibility for clinical registration.

4. Group Supervision

Group supervision has a designated supervisor who simultaneously provides supervision and facilitates the group supervision process. Group supervision can be comprised of 2 to 6 supervisee members.

An exception to this recommended optimal group size exists for training situations where a proportion of group supervision provided in groups of up to 12 trainee members will count towards meeting PACFA Training Standards (see PACFA Training Standards 4.2.2).

5. Supervisor

A supervisor is a practitioner with a minimum of 5 years clinical experience who has supervision competencies which satisfy the requirements of the PACFA Supervision Training Standards. The supervisor is generally seen to have more experience than the supervisee with regard to professional seniority, skill development and possibly within a particular speciality, although senior practitioners might select a supervisor of equal status.

6. Group Supervisor

A group supervisor who facilitates a group of supervisees, in addition to the requirements for supervisor (Appendix 1.5), has specific skills to conduct the group process and to manage any group dynamics that arise.

APPENDIX 2: PACFA REGISTER REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITED SUPERVISORS

Successful completion of a supervision training program that meets the requirements of PACFA's Supervision Training Standards qualifies a supervisor to become a PACFA Accredited Supervisor.

Supervisors must apply to PACFA for accreditation. There are additional requirements to be accredited, which are set out in the [Register Requirements for Accredited Supervisors 2020](#).

Review

The PACFA Supervision Training Standards are formally reviewed on a 3 yearly basis by the Professional Standards Committee.